United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1432
12 July 1993

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

• Two journalists killed by mob in Mogadishu after UNOSOM II engages USC/SNA command-and-control centre; Special Representative for Somalia says he will do everything in his power to find and bring killers to justice.

• Executive Chairman of Special Commission briefs Security Council after Iraq refuses to allow team to seal rocket test sites prior to installation of monitoring cameras; proposes that he go to Baghdad to discuss situation.

• Negotiations in Geneva to end Liberian civil war progress extremely well; working groups seek military agreement before proceeding to political issues.

• Commission on Human Rights Special Rapporteur asks Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) to free Mr. and Mrs. Vuk Draskovic for medical treatment; opposition leader has been on hunger strike to protest treatment since arrest on 2 June.

• Colombia tells Economic and Social Council in Geneva that United Nations must complement political action with strong economic and social sector; restructuring should take the interests of all countries into account.

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Two journalists were killed by a mob in Mogadishu today while approaching a United Somali Congress/Somali National Alliance (USC/SNA) command-and-control centre which had earlier been attacked by United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) forces. Another two journalists were missing and presumed dead after the incident, and two were treated for wounds.

The journalists had gone into the area with USC/SNA escorts against the advice of UNOSOM II forces, which had withdrawn after sweeping and securing the centre, according to a United Nations spokesman. UNOSOM II's precision attack had been carried out in order to disrupt USC/SNA command-and-control

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capabilities, to respond to recent attacks on UNOSOM II personnel and the murder of six Somali United Nations employees, and to drive the USC/SNA from its base of operations and to facilitate its disarmament.

Special Representative Jonathan Howe described the attack on the journalists as an "outrageous and barbaric" act against innocent civilians -- members of the press who were covering events in Somalia honestly and professionally -- and said UNOSOM II would do everything in its power to find those responsible and to bring them to justice. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali strongly supported Admiral Howe's statement, and expressed his condolences to the families and colleagues of those murdered.

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Rolf Ekeus, Executive Chairman of the Special Commission on the disarmament of Iraq, briefed the Security Council today after the country refused to allow a team of experts to seal two rocket test sites over the weekend, proposing that he go to Baghdad to discuss the situation. The sites were to have been sealed until monitoring cameras could be installed to ensure that they were not being used for prohibited purposes. The Commission team withdrew from Baghdad following Iraq's action.

The Security Council had previously found Iraq's refusal to permit the installation of cameras at the sites to be a breach of resolution 687 (1991), which was the basis for the cease-fire after the Gulf War, and a violation of resolutions 707 (1991) and 715 (1991).

A spokesman for the Special Commission today said Iraq was continuing to talk about its desire for a dialogue with the Commission and the Security Council to assess its compliance with resolution 687 (1991). He said Iraq was clearly aiming to have economic sanctions against it lifted.

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Negotiations in Geneva to end the Liberian civil war are progressing extremely well, with participants working among themselves in a spirit of accomodation, a United Nations spokesman said today. The week-long negotiations, which began on Saturday, are aimed at creating an atmosphere of trust for implementation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Peace Plan and the 1992 Yamoussoukro IV Accord, which called for a cease-fire, disarmament and democratic elections.

The parties adopted an agenda on Sunday, and then established small working groups to negotiate an agreement on military issues, according to the spokesman. Political issues will be taken up as soon as military ones are settled.

Taking part in the negotiations are representatives of the Interim Government of National Unity of Liberia; the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL); the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL); and the United Liberation Movement for Democracy of Liberia (ULIMO). ECOWAS Foreign Ministers may join

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the peace process at the end of the week. The negotiations are being co-chaired by Trevor Gordon-Somers, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Liberia; Canaan Banana, Eminent Person of the Organization of African Unity (OAU); and Abass Bundu, Executive Secretary of ECOWAS.

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The Commission on Human Rights Special Rapporteur on the former Yugoslavia, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, has asked the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) to free Mr. and Mrs. Vuk Draskovic pending their trial, to allow them proper medical treatment. Mr. Draskovic is a leader of one of the main opposition parties in Belgrade and the couple are considered political prisoners.

Mr. Mazowiecki wrote to Vladislav Jovanovic, the Federal Republic's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, on 8 July saying that his concern had been motivated by reports that the police had used excessive and unnecessary force when arresting Mr. and Mrs. Draskovic on 2 June. That concern had deepened after the couple had been admitted to the Neurological Clinic of Belgrade more than two weeks after their arrest. Mr. Draskovic had begun a hunger strike to protest his treatment, and Mr. Mazowiecki said he feared that indifference to his condition might have tragic consequences.

Mr. Mazowiecki also expressed concern about the circumstances leading to the arrest of the Draskovics and the manner in which the arrest had been carried out. The Special Rapporteur's mandate includes ensuring compliance of domestic law and criminal procedures with internationally accepted human rights.

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Colombia, on behalf of the "Group of 77" developing countries and China, has told the Economic and Social Council in Geneva that a United Nations which does not complement political action with a strong economic and social sector is bound to disappear. Colombia said on Friday that a restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the Organization which took into account the interests of all countries in a balanced way would be supported by the developing countries.

Colombia said its recent "no action" motion on a General Assembly draft resolution on the restructuring process had been the only way of working towards a consensus. It was not a vote against the draft but was rather a vote of confidence in order to resume the debate and reach conclusions satisfactory to all concerned. Colombia said there had been a consensus on all provisions of the draft, except for a paragraph on the composition of governing bodies of funds and programmes of the Organization.

Meanwhile, the Economic and Social Council's Social Committee continued its debate on the advancement of women, with Friday's discussion focusing on violence against women and their exclusion from economic and political activity. Participants called for the adoption of a draft declaration on the

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elimination of violence against women, which had been elaborated by the Commission on the Status of Women. Some speakers stressed the importance of the fourth World Conference on Women, to be convened in Beijing in 1995, as a step towards improving the situation of women around the world. Pointing to the deterioration in conditions for women in some areas and their exclusion from public life, they said the time for action had come.

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